

I. As a long time Amateur Radio operator, currently a grandfathered Advanced class licensee, one who learned Morse code to gain my Novice license, and then increase code speed proficiency for advancement from Novice to General class, I am in favor of keeping the code – even at the minimalist level – as a licensing requirement for the Extra Class license.

IF all Morse code requirements are removed from Amateur Radio licensing, and, maintaining the balance of the current licensing structure, anyone memorizing a published list of questions and answers will get the desired license, regardless of whether or not one understands the electrical/electronic/antenna or on-air etiquette theory behind the questions. How is this advancing the hobby or the emergency preparedness it stands for?

By maintaining the code requirement, at least for the Extra class, not only will the “masses” have access to the hobby of Amateur Radio and the majority of the allotted amateur radio frequencies, but those wishing to advance, to prove their technical knowledge AND code proficiency, will gain the privileges of doing so, and the minuscule “extra” frequency allotted the Extra class ticket holder.

Is the use of Morse code outdated? It’s no more outdated than learning to write with a pencil, instead of a keyboard. It’s no more outdated than learning to add without a calculator/computer. The pencil, learning addition, and Morse code all serve a purpose in today’s world....a diminutive purpose, but a purpose nonetheless.

In today’s digital society, if one wants to “talk”, get a cellular phone; wants to use a keyboard, stay on the Internet; BUT if one wants to learn how to communicate in an emergency situation, when all else has failed, when even the band conditions are such that “voice” is questionable, LEARN the code!!! It is “ancient,” but it is tried and proven.

II. As to the question of Amateur licensing, there should remain the Technician, the General, and the Extra. Both the Novice and the Advanced retain their grandfathered status, but for period of 10 years. At the end of the 10 years, the frequencies designated to the Advanced license would be removed, leaving the Technician, General and Extra as presently allotted.

III. Further, the Extra class “theory” test should be re-structured to insure that one passing the test demonstrates adequate “theory” knowledge...Rather than merely correctly answering 37 of 50 questions. An assignment the VECs could handle with little problem.

Thank you,

Gary Jones